Dahlgren: A Unique National Asset

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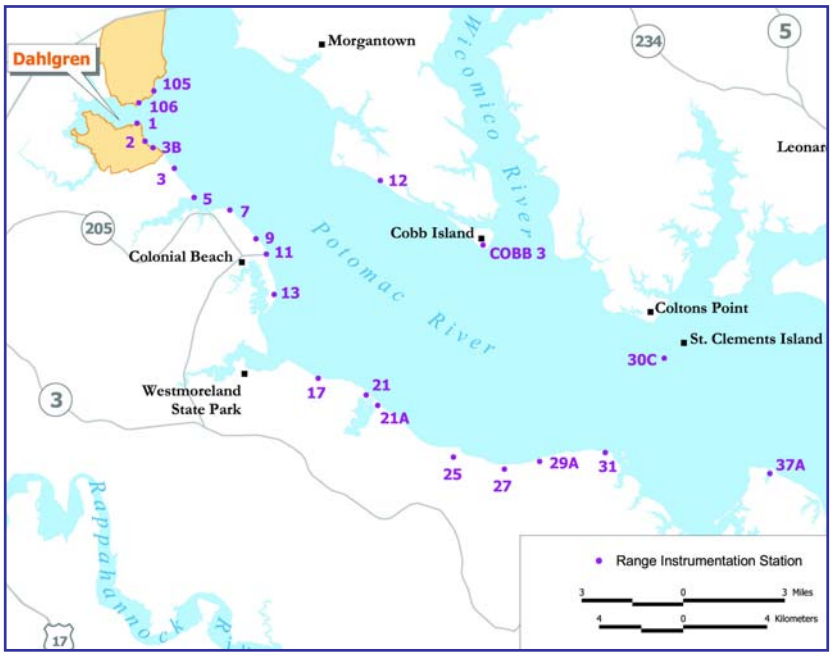
A Dahlgren Public Affairs Fact Sheet

Four characteristics that make Dahlgren a unique national asset:

1. Coastal environment and varied climate
2. Fully instrumented over-the-water range
3. On-site expertise and equipment for complete development process
4. Proximity to other key military and government installations

Dahlgren has been at the core of US Naval strength for nearly a century. Today, it also supports other branches of the military, the joint forces of our allies, and the Department of Homeland Security. From surface combat systems and advanced weapons to strategic strike capabilities and homeland protection, Dahlgren provides overwhelming technological advantage to our nation and our troops. The nation is very fortunate to have this unique research, development, testing and evaluation (RDT&E) facility. Four characteristics make Dahlgren invaluable to our nation:

1. Coastal Environment and Varied Climate



Because weapon systems and sensors function differently over water than over land, it is necessary to test them in a coastal environment that blends land, air, and water with varying weather conditions.

At Dahlgren, we can test and evaluate weapons and equipment in a coastal location that is similar to the environment around the world where many of today's conflicts occur. Dahlgren is one of the few Navy locations that can provide a coastal environment for RTD&E supporting military preparedness.

2. Fully Instrumented Over-the-Water Range

Dahlgren has a multitude of test facilities that support its RDT&E activities. Among them are the Potomac River Test Range (PRTR) complex (map on back page) and the Explosives Experimental Area (EEA) range complex. Dahlgren's PRTR is the nation's largest fully-instrumented over-the-water gun firing range. It allows the Navy to efficiently conduct testing in a realistic, controlled environment.


Dahlgren and the Potomac River

Using the fully-instrumented PRTR together with our other RDT&E facilities, we can interact in real time with the fleet and other branches of the military to conduct global military exercises. This not only provides the Navy with a cost-effective method to develop new weapons and systems, but it also speeds the development process.

For information on Dahlgren or to offer comments, please contact:

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General Web site:
www.nswc.navy.mil

Range Web site:
www.nswc.navy.mil/wwwDL/RANGE/

3. On-site Expertise and Equipment for Complete Development Process

With our extraordinary team of scientists and engineers, extensive and cutting-edge equipment, and fully integrated RDT&E capabilities, we can take entire projects from idea to prototype to deployment right here at Dahlgren.

These assets also enable us to respond quickly and effectively to ever-changing situations. One example of rapid response is the recent need by the Marines in Iraq for improved armor plating and windshield material. Many of the military's transportation vehicles have minimal armor protection against attacks by small arms fire, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), and rocket propelled grenades. The Marines came to Dahlgren urgently requesting assistance. Dahlgren's engineers and scientists worked 24/7 to develop – in just a few weeks' time – improved shielding. In addition to being protective, the new armor had to be lightweight, and more than a dozen materials were tested. The final product is protection that can literally be sprayed onto the vehicles in layers, providing added security and flexibility. Another advantage is that this process can be done in place, precluding the need for vehicles to be removed from the field for upgrade.

4. Proximity to Other Key Military Installations and Government Agencies

Finally, the proximity of Dahlgren and its resident scientists and engineers to the seat of the federal government and numerous military installations (from the Pentagon to Naval Station Norfolk) fosters scientific, technical, and operational collaboration across services and government agencies.

The combination of our outstanding RDT&E capabilities, our testing facilities, and our physical location makes us a hub within this important network of agencies and installations.